



James Eric MORWOOD

FIEAust

1901-1974
INDUCTED IN 2021

James Eric Morwood, electrical engineer, was educated at Toowoomba Grammar School where he was dux and won a state government scholarship to the University of Queensland. In 1923 he graduated in mechanical and electrical engineering, with first-class honours and the University Medal. In 1931 he was awarded a Master of Engineering.

In June 1923, when the electric tramway system was expanding rapidly, Morwood was appointed a junior engineer in the Countess Street power station of the Brisbane Tramways Trust. Two years later, the newly created Greater Brisbane City Council absorbed the Tramway Trust and embarked on the development of a new power station at New Farm. He would go on to work for the various Brisbane City Council electrical authorities until his retirement in 1966.

For two years from 1925, Morwood used a Walter and Eliza Hall Travelling Fellowship to visit railway, tramway and electricity supply organisations and engineering laboratories in England, Europe, and the USA, studying power generation and distribution, and electric traction systems. He subsequently delivered a series of special lectures at the University of Queensland. A delay in his departure from Australia, due to industrial action, saw him also spend two months studying the electrification of Sydney suburban railways and of Victorian railways and industries.

On his return to Brisbane in 1927, he was appointed assistant engineer, Tramways Department of Brisbane of Brisbane City Council. Morwood spent a large part of his early career in commissioning and operation of the New Farm power station.

He became chief engineer at New Farm power station in 1948 and in 1951 was appointed deputy chief engineer of the council's department of electricity, which included the Brisbane suburban electricity distribution system, the power station, and the tramway system.

On 1 July 1955 he was appointed chief engineer and manager of the electricity department. This was a period of great expansion in Brisbane, and he is remembered particularly for his major role in planning, designing and construction of the new major station at Tennyson. Commissioned in 1955 with the first of four 30MW sets, it expanded finally to six sets totalling 240MW including two 60MW sets which were the largest in Queensland at the time.

In 1963 the state government sought to rationalise electricity supply in south-eastern Queensland. Morwood's role in the negotiations led to the transfer of the New Farm and Tennyson power stations to the Southern Electric Authority of Queensland (SEAQ). Council purchased the inner-city distribution system from SEAQ, to become a distribution utility purchasing all its energy from high voltage bulk supply substations provided by SEAQ. He retired in 1966.

Morwood worked tirelessly for the standards and standing of the engineering profession. He served on the Brisbane Division Committee of Engineers Australia, from 1940 to 1955 and was division chairman in 1945. He contributed a number of papers to the division's technical sessions, lectured at the University of Queensland and at the Central Technical College (now QUT), and was a board member of the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Queensland. From 1965 to 1969 he was Queensland representative on the Council of the Institution of Electrical Engineers in London.

